

# BLUE GRASS BLADE.

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Charles Watts  
Editor



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## PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT

A Paper Read at the International  
Freethought Congress at Rome,  
September, 20th, 1904.

By Charles Watts, London, England.

This International Freethought Congress is unique in the history of human progress. It is composed of representatives from nearly all parts of the civilized world. It voices the heartfelt gratification of thousands of earnest men and women who look back with sorrow upon the gloom and darkness of the past, and who, with feeling of pride and joy, contemplate the sunshine of the present. Freethought is the emblem of liberty and the precursor of advancement. The desire of the numerous delegates assembled at this Congress is to increase individual happiness and to promote national freedom and international harmony. Francis Bacon has written that "the great multiplication of virtues upon human nature resteth upon societies well ordered and disciplined." Such ordering and disciplining cannot possibly be more effectually secured than by carefully considering, with a view to their correction, the evils of the past and the shortcomings of the present, so that fair prospects may reasonably be entertained of a better and happier future.

Two thousand years have passed since, according to the orthodox belief, the angels of an omnipotent God came down through the blue of the firmament with the welcome message of "Peace on earth, good will towards men." Instead, however, of such peace and goodwill having been inaugurated the centuries that have since passed have been notorious for exhibitions of discord and hatred. In lieu of peace and happiness we have had disunion and misery. Many of our so-called Christian institutions and laws have kept the people in idleness and degradation. Pauperism has been perpetuated, bad habits have been fostered, and crime has been encouraged. Today, under the shadows of our proud cathedrals with their lofty domes, where incense burns and gaily vested priests and vestal virgins praise to God, we find things still existing, robbing the race of its true heritage of individual happiness and national greatness.

The true remedy for this deplorable condition of things is to be found in the moral, physical, and intellectual development of human nature, the acquirement and application of purely secular education, and the destruction of all priestly power as hampering human thought and action. The highest outcome of ancient civilization in Greece and Rome was at a time when democratic freedom adorned their history. In Athens and republican Rome we have a glowing illustration of this fact. Potent in arms, able at one period to defend and preserve their liberties against every aggressor, these States were mighty in other and nobler fields. In philosophy, science, literature, art and all that enriches and elevates the human race, these grand democracies were unequalled. Even to-day they are to us as luminaries—they "being dead, yet speak," to all posterity.

As the oldest delegate present from Great Britain, having spent nearly a half-century in Freethought propaganda, it is to me an unequalled pleasure to testify, not only to the rapid growth of Freethought, but also to the improved methods of its advocacy. Old creeds have their day, and before the power of modern thought the superstition which those creeds bolstered up is fast tottering to its very basis. Although the right of free speech is not universally won, we are nevertheless much nearer its triumph than were our predecessors when the Church burnt to ashes that noble martyr, the undaunted Bruno. All honor to his memory. Long may the recollection of his heroic deeds inspire mankind to carry on the grand work to which he devoted and sacrificed his life. In Great Britain heretical views now find free expression, the spirit of the times having outgrown the idea of suppression or persecution. In fact, heresy has become so fashionable that even bishops and prominent Anglican clergymen are openly indulging in the luxury. This progress is most encouraging and inspires hope that the time is not far distant when the priests, with their incantations and mummeries, will be known only as evils of the past. When that period dawns a new era will be inaugurated wherein men will be their own kings and priests—kings in their own free individuality and priests in the grand temple of nature.

Under the aegis of true Freethought virtue will array herself more resolutely than ever against vice. Brotherly love will cease slaying brother at the command of kings and despots, and the communities will be crowned with the laurels of peace. Priestcraft will lose its influence over humanity, and mental liberty will have a new birth. The barriers of social caste will be broken down, and the brotherhood of man thereby consolidated.

Some two centuries ago Pompeii

was discovered beneath the ruins caused by the fire of Vesuvius. In the niche of the entrance to the city gates rested the skeleton of the Roman guard who was on guard the fatal day that ushered in Pompeii's doom. Let us place ourselves in the niche of the temple of Freethought, guarding it against the invasion of the armies of theological bigotry, and remembering that even if we perish in the work we shall die in the noble act of duty. But there is no cause for misgiving as to our ultimate victory. If we are faithful and persistent in the stern battle for truth and mental freedom, we may with confidence hope that the theological delusions engendered during ages as dark as they are remote will ultimately disappear, and will be replaced by the grandest monument the world has ever seen—a cultured, an unfettered, and a happy people.

## HAECKEL'S "RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE."

Hon. Moses Kaufman has complimented me by asking me to write a series of articles on Ernst Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe."

My paper is too small for the purpose even were all the other contributions favorable but I want to give an outline of my idea about it.

It is the greatest book, mentally and morally, that the age has produced and I know of none greater of any age.

It is some self-flattery to me to say this because the book is, in extent, largely the same that I wrote in "The Rational View," in 1890. The difference in the value of the two books—both of them being largely indebted to Darwin—is that while my book is the combined result of the conclusions of a man of no repute for science, and but limited observations of the material and data from which to get information on the subjects under consideration, Mr. Haeckel's book is the offspring of a mind stored with all the learning of the world requisite for the discussion and having almost unlimited capacity for profoundest thought.

A great source of pleasure, therefore, to me, personally, in reading the book was to find that it confirmed the judgments that I have written in my paper from time to time, and to enable me thus to assure those who have read what I have said.

Of course, among all intelligent people, the time has come when it is understood that nobody but the very best and dullest believes the silly story that the first man was made of dust and the first woman of a bone, but I must acknowledge that I, even when writing of our similar origin, have felt some kind of misgiving; but, on reading Haeckel, the proposition that man is a development from the anthropoid ape is as plain as any other deduction of science—so plain, indeed, that now, as is the case in all discoveries, it seems strange that the intelligent world could have been so long in seeing it.

Under this head Haeckel's conclusions are stronger than are the most competent conclusions of astronomy and geology.

In the department of the mental nature of man, which for convenience, Haeckel calls the "soul," he grows very difficult of comprehension, not only from any purpose of sophomoricness, but because the subject is essentially abstruse and because, writing as he does for learned men, he uses, for terseness and brevity, the technical terminology current among such men.

For the mere layman, therefore, a mere reading of that part of the book will not be all that is necessary, but he will do well if he understands it after having put upon it his hardest study.

But as far as I can understand him from only the rapid reading, his ideas of the soul, and his dualism and monism are the same as mine in "The Rational View."

Haeckel speaks of man's antecedents having existed for a hundred millions of years, and I speak of them as having existed eternally.

For all practical purposes, in mental operations a hundred millions of years and eternity are the same, but I think that even theoretically, in this particular, I am right and Haeckel wrong, for if matter is eternal, and reaches from all eternity to all eternity, and man is matter even in his intellectual nature, as Haeckel teaches, and as is evident to me, thought being but a function of the brain, as sight is of the eye, it must be that man, in some stage, or stages, of his development, has existed to all eternity; not, certainly, in his present form, or in any part of his present form, any more than a tree or a horse will, and as the silly ecclesiastics teach that he will do, but eternally in some form, as the tree and the horse will do.

But the grandest part of Haeckel's book is the moral conclusions that he adduces, and this part of it any fair intelligence can appreciate and all can practice.

His great conclusion is that we should all, in order to the promotion of our own happiness, a legitimate and the only practical motive to morality, do all that we can to make others happy.

This is the great work that remains for infidelity to accomplish and upon infidels, more than upon any others, there lies the responsibility of showing to the world that beneficence to man and animals, in this world, is the

main great work for all good people to engage in, and that, per consequence, the claims of religion are all silly and unworthy the dignity of true men and women.

## SUNDAY LAW IN LEXINGTON.

On Sunday, October 2, in Lexington, the preachers, established a Sunday law that would put to the blush anything in the line of "blue laws" that were ever done in Connecticut.

They proposed to stop the barbers, bootblacks, newspapers and saloons. But they bit off more than they could chew when they proposed to stop the newspapers and the editors went on retailing pieties and politics from the same old stands.

For about two weeks the boys managed to stand it by taking home extra large jars of the water of life on Saturday nights. But they soon got tired of it and the good young preachers, from little Jack Mack's preacher factory, got tired of acting police and detectives without any pay, and the saloons resumed business at the same old stands on Sunday, by being just a little careful to be sly about it.

Last Sunday a man by the distinguished name of Moore was murdered in a saloon by some negroes and the testimony gave the whole snap away by showing that the Sunday law had fallen into innocuous desuetude so far as bootblacks and barbers are still reverentially observing the Sabbath.

My poor name-sake was 42 years old and left a wife and ten children and a fortune of \$14 on which they are to live, or die, as the event may prove.

Moore took the same view of "race suicide" that Teddy did, and Teddy would doubtless send Mrs. Moore and her ten children a nice premium of some kind, except that Teddy is elected now and it would not do him any good as an advertisement.

They captured the three negroes that murdered Moore and have had out the state guard to keep the mob from laming them and there is hell to pay generally.

I can stop all this racket about killing in saloons, especially on the Lord's day, and do it p. d. q. if they will simply give me the management of it to me. I would keep all police and other officers out of all saloons and notify the public that, from that time on, there would be no arrests for any kind of crimes committed in saloons and let every fellow who went into one take his chances on his own responsibility, and on all of them full blast seven days a week and twenty four hours each day.

I never yet heard of a bar keeper who did not skin out to save his own hide as soon as the shooting among his guests commenced. But let it be so that Carrie Nation or any other brand of damnation can go into any saloon without hesitation, perturbation, intimidation, or molestation, and smash and cut and shoot to their hearts content, so that the biggest dog will come out on top and the devil take the hindmost and the gangs that are always raising hell in the saloons would soon clean out each other and thus avoid all the expense of law and soldiers and things that these saloons are constantly bringing upon the public.

There are men who claim to have common sense and good morals who say they have a right to have their drinks and want the saloons.

Let all such men have their drinks and their saloons but don't protect them by law in the saloons, and arrest them and put them in the workhouse as soon as they appear drunk outside of a saloon and thus become dangerous to the public.

## BARE-FOOTED LIKE JESUS.

A woman named Samantha Johnson, from Huntington, W. Va., has been preaching on the streets in Lexington.

She is, as all agree, a perfectly well behaved woman and preaches the same old gospel that is preached by the regular professional male sky-pilots.

She says that God told her plainly not to wear any shoes and so she preached bare-footed.

The police arrested her several times for being bare-footed, and she was finally adjudged a lunatic and sent to the Lexington asylum for the insane, with no charge in the world against her except that she will go bare-footed.

All the pictures of Jesus Christ represent him as bare-footed and the big picture of God that I saw in Bethlehem of Judea represents him as being bare-footed. So that if Jesus Christ or God should ever take a notion to come to Lexington they better get them some shoes for if they come into Lexington bare-footed the police will send them to the lunatic asylum—that is unless the police discriminate between males and females.

## CONGREGATION WARNED TO WATCH PURSES AS THEY PRAY.

Chicago, Nov. 14.—"Keep an eye on your purse when you're praying, if you don't somebody may steal it," the Rev. J. M. Fitzsimmons, of the Holy Name Cathedral, told his congregation Sunday morning preceding the mass. "There have been so many purses stolen lately while women of this parish were on their knees at prayer that it is time something was said about it," the pastor continued. "Someone is coming to service here,

not to pray but to steal. It is a painful duty, but I warn you to be on your guard against that person."

"It is customary, I notice for the women of the parish to leave their pocketbooks in the seats when they kneel in prayer. This is wrong. It allows the thief to take the purse with ease."

"Hereafter I advise you when you pray to put your purse on the seat in front of you and watch it."

After the services Father Fitzsimmons said he had been supplied with the description of a woman who had acted suspiciously in church on several occasions.

## SHE RENOUNCES CATHOLICISM.

A Louisville, Kentucky woman, named Miss Mary G. Caldwell, gave \$2,000.00 to some European scrub nobility for his title and she is now Marquise Des Monstiers Merinville—big lot of money for a lot of big name.

Her kinsman and guardian, Bishop Spalding, wheedled her into giving \$300,000 to a Catholic college in the District of Columbia, and now she says she has found out from seeing Catholicism in Europe that it is not the thing she thought it was, and she has renounced, not to say denounced Catholicism, and doubtless would like to have her money back; but the fellows that have her money say they can't see it, and while I wish she had given it to the Blade, I believe the fellows who got it have a right to hold on to it and if they don't do it it will be the first time I ever heard of Catholic priests letting a good thing go when they could hold onto it.

Mary is said not to have been a lovely character, but her sister Lina, was lovelier. The latter renounced Catholicism and is now an infidel.

## ROME CONGRESS BOOK.

Do You Want It?

If I am to write the Rome Book, I want to get at it at once, before my busy season begins. For this and other urgent reasons, I must know right now how many will take it. I have to report of fund.

Cash collected ..... \$630  
Expenses of trip ..... 445  
Balance ..... 185  
Cash collected at St. Louis ..... 215

Total amount on hands ..... \$20  
Of the above \$20, fifty dollars is in the possession of Mr. Hughes. Subscription service is instead of to Mr. Sachs.

I will have to have more subscriptions to get out the book. For a number of reasons, it is urgent that I know at once, so all who desire it, please write to Mr. Sachs. Besides writing up the Rome Congress, I will embody a large part of the letters I am writing in the Book. Besides I will give a history of how Christianity happened to take root in Rome, and spread from there over the world. You have already formed some idea of what the book will be by the letters so far published. The letter on Milan, will probably be the last published in the Blade, and all the best is yet to come.

Address Morris Sachs, Atlas Bank Bldg, Cincinnati, Ohio.

J. B. W.

## EV. ZACHARY ACQUITTED.

Recently Rev. Zachary, Campbellite, Lexington, got into a debate with a Baptist at Bandanna, in this state.

Rev. Zachary was probably making it too warm for the Baptist and the Baptist started a story that Zach had made some suggestions to a Baptist sister, who was a cook, said suggestions not being strictly of a spiritual nature.

The parties ventilated each other in handbills copies of each side of which were sent me and I printed each side in the Blade, totting strictly fair.

The matter then got into the civil courts, and, after two days of examination and trial, Zachary was acquitted. When one of my old Campbellite preaching brethren gets into a scrape purely on his own responsibility, he may get out the best way he can or stay in if he can't get out, but I am not going to stand by and see any Baptist get up just any old lie on the Campbellite simply because the Campbellite is licking him in the argument.

It has been so long since I was a preacher that I almost forgot the code that obtains among the professed, but I think there is an understanding that the preaching brethren of one sect shall not be too fly with the sisters of another sect, the code, on that point, being based upon the common law doctrine against trespassing on the preserves of another, and as an older preacher I would advise Rev. Zachary, in the future, to keep strictly within the limitations of the code of his calling.

## THE ROME BOOK.

I wish to say that I have received the full business report of the Rome Congress, printed in French, and that I will at once set in to write the book, and hope to have it completed and in your hands by March, or as soon thereafter as possible.

The title will be The Rome Freethought Congress, and Glimpses of Travel in Italy, or some such name. I believe that it will be such a book as will please you all. I will give a good detail of the Congress, with my impressions of its influence and effect. Besides I will add much bearing upon

the origin and decadence of Christianity in Rome and the rise and progress of Freethought. I will also include a history of my travels throughout Italy, thus confining myself entirely to Italy.

My notes on Italy will far surpass in interest those of my travels in other countries. As you have already read those, it will not be necessary to reprint them, and by leaving them out will give more space for my Italian notes. The size of the book will depend upon the support given within the next few weeks. The book is certain to be published, and all those who have not subscribed and who desire it please send in your names at once. As it is settled that the book will be published and I will announce when it is placed in the hands of the binder. Thanking all my subscribers and wishing all my friends a happy and prosperous New Year.

J. B. W.

## CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH.

(Written in commemoration of that epochal event, the convening of the World's Congress of Freethinkers in Rome, Italy, Sept. 20, 1904.)

In the heart of the Seven Hilled City  
You long sat superbly enthroned,  
A courtesan-queen, without pity  
While all of humanity groaned  
Beneath the red rod that you wielded  
In the name of a crucified Lord,  
And the cross that your holy shame shielded  
Served well as the hilt of a sword.

You slew and waxed glad in the slaughter;  
You bowed down the proud and erect;

You ravaged and bloody the water  
In which you baptized your elect.  
Yea, crowned in this City Eternal,  
You governed with crime and with curse,  
With teachings and tortures infernal  
That heathens aspired to rehearse.

Your consort, whose tongue was your trumpet,  
Your awful anathemas hurled  
Till strife that was born of a strumpet  
Had wrecked all the peace of the world.

Where Jupiter once reigned with Juno  
Less cruel than Jesus, you came  
And offered the body of Bruno  
To feed to the greed of the flame.

The tiger would know more of mercy  
Than you at sanguinolent shrine;  
And vice, like the voice of a Circe,  
Your votaries turned into swine.  
Your priests, than the beasts more rapacious  
You sent forth to pillage the poor,  
And their acts shamed the prowlers  
Predaceous  
Whose haunts are the jungle and moor.

And you, tiger-queen, sat in splendor,  
While, powerless to hinder or help,  
The tortured world saw you grow tender

Alone at the whine of your whelp.  
But recently all the world feared you  
To the uttermost dwellings of men;  
Now here in your fastness we heard  
you  
And camp at the door of your den.

No longer the Vatican voices  
Its rulings for all of the race,  
For Reason now reigns and rejoices  
In liberty's glory and grace.  
No longer your hot anger scorches  
Its victims in dungeons of gloom,  
For Truth with its uplifted torches  
Is lighting the fires of your doom.

Your temporal power now is o'er;  
Your spiritual sway long has broken;  
We come and we bring you a token  
As death leaves his sign at the door.  
Within your own walls we defy you,  
And make of your mission a mock;  
Your followers speak to deny you,  
As Peter at crow of the cock.

Whatever the present presages,  
Or the past and its pages relate,  
Not all of the tears of the ages  
Extinguished the fires of your hate.  
We know this, and, knowing, we never  
Our heels shall remove from your head  
Till priestcraft has vanished forever  
And all superstition is dead.

Camden, Ohio. WALTER HURT.

## FAST FORGING FORWARD.

Idaho is one of the best watered states in America. People are moving there because hot winds and destructive storms are unknown and because its matchless climate generates physical and mental vigor and guarantees good health. Idaho has rapidly grown in popularity during the past five years and settlers in its irrigated valleys have met with more than ordinary success. This fact has induced a large influx of eastern capital in the state with the result that its growth has been rapid. If you have in mind a change for the general improvement of your condition in life, or if you are seeking a climate beneficial to health, Idaho will meet these requirements. The easiest—in fact the only direct route to Idaho points is via the Union Pacific. This road runs two trains daily from Omaha and two trains daily from Chicago and Kansas City to all points in Idaho, Montana and the great Northwest. For full particulars and descriptive information inquire of W. H. CONNER, G. A., 53 E. Fourth St., Cincinnati, Ohio.